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KJÆMPEHØIEN AND ITS RELATION TO
IBSEN'S ROMANTIC WORKS

Kjæmpehøien or *The Warrior's Mound* was the first fruit of Henrik Ibsen's interest in the Romantic literature of the North. So thoroughly was the work permeated with the spirit of Romanticism and so closely did it follow the conventional type of drama established by Danish Romantic School that it has been rightly termed 'an impersonal study after the manner of Oehlenschläger's Norse tragedies.' Nevertheless, the history of the composition of this work clearly shows that Ibsen was developing towards a different conception of the Viking character than that which the Danish dramatist, Oehlenschläger, had portrayed.

Two versions of *Kjæmpehøien* appeared, one in 1850 and the other in 1854. These two versions differ so widely from each other in dramatic treatment that it may be assumed that even as early as the year 1854, Ibsen had begun to free himself from the thralldom of Oehlenschläger's Romantic conception of the Viking character and that he now was pursuing his own way, which was to lead him later to the composition of such dramas as *Fru Inger til Østraat* (1854) and *Hærmændene paa Helgeland* (1857). These later dramas were so out of tune with the conventional Oehlenschläger type that they first met with ill success upon the Norwegian stage.

Early as the year 1849-50 in his Grimstad days, Ibsen was at work upon a Viking drama, *Olaf Trygvesson* (Breve I. II. p. 58-59) and also wrote a little one act play of the same nature, entitled *Normannerne*, which in the next year (1850), after he had come to Christiania to take his examinations for the university, he developed further into *Kæmpehøien*. This play he wrote during the Easter vacation and in its first form presented it to the Christiania theater, where (unlike *Catalina*) it was accepted, under the title "*Kjæmpehøien, dra-*

¹ *Henrik Jæger, Henrik Ibsen*, p. 67-68. Baade i form og indhold er det en upersonlig studie efter Oehlenschlägers nordiske tragedier.

matisk Digtning in I Act af Brynjolf Bjarme."² This little one-act Viking drama was quite in harmony with the prevailing literary taste in Norway and was well received, establishing the first signs of Ibsen's literary reputation in Christiania. It was first played September 26, 1850, and repeated twice, September 29 and October 24 of the same year. After its first performance the play was somewhat disdainfully criticized but not without recognition of its poetic value in *Christiania Posten* ³ No. 744, but somewhat later received as much favorable criticism in *Krydseren*,³ No. 77.

In the meantime the author himself was not entirely satisfied with the form of his work and therefore while he was in Bergen, as theater director and playwright, he subjected the play to a thorough revision. In this revised form he introduced it to the Norwegian Theater in Bergen, January 2, 1854, where it was given only once again, February 15, 1856. In its original form of 1850, *Kjæmpehøien* was never printed and our sole knowledge of the work is based upon the "*Sufflørbog*" (promptbook) of Christiania Theater, now preserved in the archives of the National Theater at Christiania. From this "*Sufflørbog*" Henrik Jæger has given an analysis and criticism of the work in his "*Norske Forfattere*" (Kbh. 1883), p. 161-178. In the revised form of 1854, the play was printed directly after its performance in Bergen, as a "feuilleton" in *Bergenske Blade* 1854, No. 9-13. The numbers of this newspaper cannot be found for the year 1854, but there is a copy of the "feuilleton" in the library of the Bergen Theater, from which the play is published by Halvdan Koht in the "*Supplementsbind*" of "*Henrik Ibsen's Samlede Værker*," (Kbh. 1902), p. 1-44.

That Ibsen, himself, thought well of this little Viking drama is certain from the fact that long after he had left the field of Romantic literature he took pleasure in reading *Kjæmpehøien* again. In June, 1897, Julius Elias and Paul Schlenther, Ibsen's ardent admirers and the chief exponents of the poet's cause in Germany and Austria, sent him a detailed plan for

² *Henrik Ibsen, Samlede Værker, Supplementsbind, Bibliografiske Oplysninger* ved Halvdan Koht, p. I. ff.

³ *Henrik Jæger, Norske Forfattere*, p. 169-771.

the publication of his *Complete Works* in German. Ibsen approved the plan but there was some difficulty in obtaining copies of his earliest works for translation. Many of these were sent to Vienna in manuscript form, among which was *Olaf Löljekrans*, September 1, 1897, and a little later, September 7, 1897, *Kjæmpehøien*, when the poet took occasion to write to Elias: "Today I am sending you *Kjæmpehøien* which I finally have succeeded in getting into my possession. After reading it through, I find there is after all much good in this little, youthful work, and I thank you sincerely that you compelled me to include it in the collection."

The influence of Oehlenschläger upon both versions of *Kjæmpehøien* is unmistakable. The general theme of the play, the contrast of the sturdy Norse warriors with the weaker race of Southern clime, the brutality of the heathen religion of Odin and Thor over against the ennobling influences of Christianity, together with many individual details,⁴ are sufficient evidence that Oehlenschläger had served Ibsen to a large degree as the model for his work.

The chief difference in the general nature of Ibsen's work and those of his Danish predecessor is that Ibsen lays the main stress upon the contrast between Christianity and heathendom as moral factors in the development of character, while Oehlenschläger is chiefly concerned in depicting the vital power of the North in contrast with the effete and degenerate life of the self-indulgent South.⁵

Fredrik Paasche, now *Universitetsstipendiat* in the *History of Literature* at the University of Christiania, has treated the whole question of Ibsen and his relation to the Romantic

⁴Such as Blanka's dream realized in the person of the Viking Chief Gandalf (cf. Tordenskjold and Miss Carteret in "*Tordenskjold*"). Maria and Harald Haarderaade in "*Væringerne i Miklegard*" and such as the figure of the aged Rørek who determines to spend the rest of his life upon the island as a hermit (cf. Kuetsalcoal alias Bjørn in "*Landet fundet og forsvundet*")

George Brandes, Henrik Ibsen, p. 123-127.

Henrik Jæger, Henrik Ibsen, p. 67-71.

Henrik Jæger, Norske Forfattere, p. 174-178.

⁵*Henrik Jæger, Henrik Ibsen*, p. 69.

Movement in his essay upon "*Gildet paa Solhaug*,"⁶ in which he devotes especial attention to the variance in dramatic treatment in the two versions of *Kjæmpehøien* (p. 63-65). Here the author shows that the main difference in these two versions consists in the superior delineation of character in the second.

The writer of this article agrees with Herr Paasche that there is an inner necessity in the later version, which brings about the change of heart in Gandalf and his warriors. In the first version Gandalf is persuaded to renounce his Viking vow of revenge by Blanka's series of declamations which savor strongly of *Oehlenschläger's* bombast. One almost feels that she is sermonizing. The wild Viking Chief is suddenly converted into an exponent of the Christian faith. His warriors follow him without dissent, but neither Gandalf nor his men are in any wise prepared for this violent change. Therefore, the transition from the brutal doctrines of heathendom to the teachings of Christ is too sudden to be natural and savors more of *Oehlenschläger* than of Ibsen. The chief virtue of Ibsen's dramas as a whole consists in his wonderful analysis of human character. Of *Oehlenschläger* one can hardly say that his dramas are anything more than dramatized romances. With him skill in character delineation is conspicuously lacking; exactly the opposite is true of Ibsen.

In his second version of *Kjæmpehøien* Ibsen has to a large extent remedied the weakness of the first. With skilful hand he prepares Gandalf for this inner change. Gandalf's men too, still heathen at heart, do not all follow their chieftain's example as a mere mechanical act of service, as in the version of 1850, but, true to their belief in the sacredness of their heathen oath of revenge, rebel against his conduct. Asgaut, the typical Norse Viking, views his master's act with contempt and openly avows his intention to leave the land of

⁶ *Fredrik Paasche, Smaaskrifter fra det litteraturhistoriske seminar, V. Gildet paa Solhaug, Ibsens National romantiske Digtning.* This work is the most detailed study of Ibsen's relation to the Romantic Movement which we possess. The work shows much literary feeling and originality, and is an invaluable contribution to the general study of the Romantic Movement in Norway.

Southern weaklings and cowards, and sail for Iceland whither the disease, which has smitten his fellow country-men, has not yet found its way:

“Jeg vil gå til Island; did er end ei sotten trængt.”

This essential and all important difference in the dramatic motivation of character between the version of 1850 and that of 1854 has not yet been sufficiently emphasized or analysed, even by Herr Paasche. First of all, Gandalf in the version of 1854 is the highest type of Viking character and one well fitted for conversion to the nobler ethics of Christianity. He repeatedly rebukes his men, especially Jostein, for their savage rapacity.⁷ Though a heathen at heart he is honorable and true to his own ideal of heathen ethics.⁸ There is a strong moral fibre to his character and such a character, especially at a time when the Old Norse religion was beginning to waver before the ever increasing power of the Christian faith, is ripe for the conversion to which Blanka gives the impulse. Such is not the case in the elder version in which Gandalf has sworn to *spare neither man nor woman* in his ruthless work of revenge.

In the later version though he rebukes his skald, Hemming, for entertaining a superstitious reverence for the Christian religion and with contempt bids him don the monk's cowl, Gandalf betrays, nevertheless, a certain loathing for the old heathen gods whom his bard exalts in song. As soon as Asgaut

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Supplementsbind, p. 14:

JOSTEIN

Det er en gammel skik, og den bør agtes!
Men hvis jeg havde været konning Gandalf,
så var jeg bleven liggende i Velskland,—
for der var guld at vinde.

8

p. 15:

GANDALF

Og nu afsted at speide rundt om øen;
ti end i nat skal hævnens være fuldbragt,
hvis ei, så må jeg falde selv.

ASGAUT

Det svor han.

GANDALF

Det svor jeg dyrt ved alle Valhals guder!
Og end engang jeg sværger.

and his Vikings leave Gandalf, the latter expresses his aversion for the crude, coarse gods of his fathers in a violent outburst of feeling. He says (p. 16-17): "He (Asgaut) never really trusts me. 'Tis well he went! It is like a weight upon my shoulders, when he is near me. The old stone-man with his rude features; he reminds me of Asathor, who in the sacrificial grove on my father's estate stood hewn out in gray stone with Mjølfnir and the magic belt." Thus it is evident that Gandalf entertains neither a feeling of reverence nor affection for the gods of his ancestors. In strong contrast to this natural aversion for the crude images of the heathen gods is the spontaneous admiration which he expresses for the graceful beauty of nature which surrounds him in the milder clime of the South. With the vision of the crude and clumsy Thor still in his mind he suddenly pauses, filled with admiration for the scene which confronts his physical sight (p. 17). "How beautiful it is here in the groves of the South; *my* fir-trees have not so sweet a perfume." Thus he betrays a fineness of feeling incompatible with the worship of stone images.

When a child, his father had told him that a part of the fallen warriors was received by Freya whose fair abode he described much like the gentle, sweet grove in which the lovely Blanka dwells. Freya is the embodiment of grace and gentleness, and represents rather the milder virtues of Christianity than does Odin who is the chief god of the Vikings and their ideal of warrior. Odin once declared war against Freya's race of the peace-loving Waners and cast his mighty spear into their midst. To escape the disgrace of the "*straw-death*" the true Norse warrior consecrated himself to Odin by running his spear through his own body. After listening to Blanka's gentle words; how she would transplant the fair flowers of the South to the barren soil of the North and cover the naked mountain-sides of Norway, infusing gentleness and love into the brutal strength of the Viking marauder, Gandalf realizes that he himself is one of the fallen warriors who shall see Freya, for now Odin no longer can claim him. The development of Gandalf's character at this

point is strongly marked and prepares us for the change soon to come.

When Blanka tells him the pitiful story of her foster-father with its touching pathos of Christian love, Gandalf forgets for a moment that he has sworn an oath of revenge (p. 25).

GANDALF

“Ha, blodhævn! Tak! Du minder mig om ordet; fast havde jeg forglemt.” So deeply is he touched by the Christian charity and devotion of this simple maid towards her enemy that he wavers in his heart to fulfil the brutal doctrine of revenge; and finally, susceptible as he is to good impulses, succumbs to the new doctrine of forgiveness. Gandalf’s character, as we have seen, is not at all incompatible with such a change of heart, for the Christian virtues are there, though under the guise of a heathen religion. Therefore, though he accepts the new doctrine in his heart he outwardly rebels against its influence for he still clings to the letter of his old religion and to the spirit of bravery and self-sacrifice which in a spiritual sense is also a part of the Christian religion. The gallant warrior is no coward, he must consecrate himself to Odin but will spare his enemy even as she spared hers. Contempt for weakness is the Viking’s chief virtue and to forgive one’s enemies must, according to the heathen code of the Asa faith, be construed as weakness. Therefore, Gandalf chooses death; a fact which reflects the heathen virtue of his character.

When his companions return and threaten to enslave or murder Blanka, Gandalf spares her life. Not only this, the Vikings are determined to slay the aged Roderik also, whom they believe to be the sole survivor of the band who murdered their chieftain Rørek. Blanka, who knows that Roderik is deceiving the Vikings in order to save her life, betrays his purpose. But she cannot believe that Gandalf, the heathen, could understand such a deed of Christian self-sacrifice. A heathen could not possibly comprehend the motive of such an act. But a real inner conversion has already taken place within Gandalf’s heart. He understands now the Christian

doctrine of self-sacrifice.⁹ Turning to his men he bids them spare the life of their supposed enemy. He, himself, therefore follows out Blanka's doctrine of self-sacrifice by offering his own life in accordance with his oath, namely, either to slay the murderer of his father or take his own life if he failed. Thus we see that Gandalf is now a heathen only according to the letter of religion, but a real Christian at heart. This transition from heathen to Christian is developed with much stronger conviction and logical sequence than in the version of 1850, where the transition is unnatural, abrupt and without the compelling force of inner development.

Blanka and Gandalf have both experienced a premonition that they were destined for each other. In the elder version Blanka has merely cherished an ideal of Norse warrior from the vivid descriptions of these brave men, which her foster-father was wont to give her. In the later version Blanka has actually dreamed that she had seen her beloved in the form of a Viking (p. 7, 8, 18), 'standing at the prow of his ship with the copper helm upon his golden locks,' etc. Gandalf too has been driven from him home by 'a secret longing, a quiet impulse' (p. 42) towards the goal of his love. Both these secret premonitions are later actually fulfilled. Fredrik Paasche (p. 89 ff.) traces the origin of this motif back of Heinrich Kleist's, *Das Käthchen von Heilbronn* and develops it further in *Olaf Liljekrans*, *Fru Inger til Østraat* and *Hærmændene paa Helgeland*.

In *Olaf Liljekrans* both Olaf and Alfild have premonitions

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p. 35-36:

BLANKA

Han skuffer eder!

(til Gandalf.)

Har du ei begrebet,
det er kun mig, sin datter han vil frelse?
Dog, hvad forstår vel du et kærligt sind,
der offerer alt for den, som—

GANDALF

Jeg forstår ei?
Du tror ei, jeg forstår?
(til Vikingerne.)

Han skal ei fældes.

of their future love. Olaf's ideal of happiness is pictured by the elfwomen as a flower (p. 84)¹⁰ which Olaf must first pluck and whose leaves he must first tear off and scatter to the winds ere he can find happiness. The flower¹¹ here is the symbol of love which must first be tried and tested ere it can be proved genuine.

In *Fru Inger til Østraat* a similar mysterious relation exists between Nils Lykke, the Danish nobleman, and Eline, daughter of Fru Inge. In the fifth act of the play, Nils Lykke in his secret interview with Eline reveals the same irresistible power over her which Graf Friedrich exerts over Kätchen. Eline has secretly cherished him in her dreams as her ideal lover. A premonition which she is powerless to resist has at last been fulfilled. Though at first hating him for his infidelity and cruelty, she at last becomes a slave to his every wish. Like Kätchen she is proud to receive a crumb from her master's hand.

In *Hærmændene paa Helgeland* this motif has assumed far greater proportions than Fredrik Paasche has led us to believe. Here in *Hærmændene* we not only have the same secret attraction of two souls for each other in the persons of Hjørdis and Sigurd but also the beginnings of the problematic phase of soul affinity which occupied such a large place in Ibsen's later social dramas, especially in the characters of *Rebecca West* and *Pastor Rosmer* in *Rosmersholm*. In *Hærmændene* the secret of this mutual love between Hjørdis and Sigurd can be traced back to the old legend of the *Volsunga Saga* where Sigurd rescues the Valkyria, *Brynhildr*, from the wall of flame. Brynhildr loves the man who rescued her, not

¹⁰ *Supplementsbind.*

¹¹ It would have been well if, in the chapter upon the relation of the German Romantic School to Ibsen's poetry (Gildet paa Solhaug som led av Ibsen's digtning, p. 96 ff.), Herr Paasche had brought this symbol of happiness in *Olaf Liljekrans* in connection with the favorite symbol cherished by Novalis and his School, namely, "die blaue Blume" of *Henrich von Ofterdingen* (1799-1800); although there is probably no direct connection between this and Ibsen's flower of love, other than that of pure poetic fantasy.

the man she weds.¹² In *Hærmændene* Hjørdis, in spite of her marriage to Gunnar, cherishes the same love for the brave as does Brynhildr. This love for Sigurd is a part of Hjørdis's wild, Valkyria nature, a part of her life's destiny, a thread spun at her birth by the inexorable Norns which connects her destiny with Sigurd's; if this thread be broken, two lives are lost instead of one.

Hærmændene

ACT III

Hjørdis (med høihed). Det er *nornens råd*, at vi to skal holde sammen; det *kan ei ændres*; grant ser jeg nu mit hverv i livet: at gøre dig berømmelig over alle lande. Du har stået for mig hver dag, hver time jeg leved her; jeg vilde rive dig ud af mit sind, men magted det ikke; nu gøres det ei nødigt, nu da jeg véd du elsker mig.

Hjørdis (med høihed). Jeg blev hjemløs i verden fra den dag du tog en anden til viv. Ilde handled du den gang! Alle gode gaver kan manden give til sin fuldtro ven,—alt, kun ikke den kvinde han har kær; thi gør han det, da *bryder han nornens lønlige spind og to liv forspildes*.

In her deep seated passion for Sigurd, her dominant will and unlimited ambition, Hjørdis possesses that same type of masculine character which Ibsen later develops in *Rebecca West* who likewise strives to shape the destiny of the man she loves. Bound to him by the invisible thread of destiny, a spiritual kinship which no power can alter, she demands as the price of her love that both share the fate of the unfortunate wife, who has been wedded to the man destined for another and thus has broken 'the secret thread of the norns.' Thus two lives must be sacrificed instead of one.

Another very striking parallel in this relation of soul kinship we find between *Hærmændene* and *Kæmpehøien* itself. In both instances, the lovers, though predestined for each other in this life, are to be separated in the next by reason of their religious faith; one being a Christian and the other a

¹² cf. *Sigrun*, in *Helgakviða Hundingsbana* II, who has loved Helgi before she has ever seen him. She too begs him to rescue her, in this instance from her betrothed, Hoðbrodd, son of Granmar.

heathen. This is not at all a strange motif in a Viking drama, since one of the chief questions of interest involved is the struggle between heathendom and Christianity. In *Hærmændene* Sigurd has been converted to Christianity by King Athelstan of England, while upon a Viking expedition into that country. When Hjørdis shoots the fatal arrow and Sigurd falls, she believes that they will now be united in Valhalla and thus the thread of the Norns will remain unbroken. But their separation is now eternal for Sigurd is a Christian. He must go to meet 'the white God,' while Hjørdis must enter the portals of Valhalla.

Hærmændene

ACT IV

Hjørdis (jublende, idet hun iler hen til ham:) Sigurd, min broder,—nu hører vi hinanden til!

Sigurd. Nu mindre end før. Her skilles vore veie; thi jeg er en krisnet mand.

Hjørdis. (forfærdet.) Du—! Ha, nei, nei!

Sigurd. Den hvide gud er min; kong Ædelstan har lært mig ham at kende; det er op til ham jeg nu går. Hjørdis (i fortvilelse.) Og jeg—! (slipper buen.) Ve, ve!

Thus the thread spun by the Norns at her birth, is broken and two lives are lost instead of one.

In *Kjæmpehøien* when Gandalf, in fulfillment of his oath, determines to take his own life, Blanka rejoices, believing that they shall yet be united in the life to come. But Gandalf is a heathen, Blanka a Christian, therefore they must now be separated forever.

Supplementsbind, p. 38-39

SCENE VII

BLANKA

Vi mødes atter!

GANDALF

Aldrig, aldrig mer!

Dig venter himlen og den hvide Krist,
Jer går til Valhal; taus jeg sætter mig
ved bordets ende, nederst imod døren,
thi hallens lystighed er ei for mig.

But here the softer light of Oehlenschläger's Romanticism casts its rays upon the scene. Gandalf is released from his heathen oath by the sudden revelation of Roderik's identity. A reconciliation follows in which Blanka is united with Gandalf who determines to renounce his wild Viking habits for a peaceful life at home.

Fredrik Paasche¹³ has noted the influence of *Welhaven* (1807-1873) and *Heiberg* (1791-1860) upon Ibsen's second version of *Kjømpehøien*. Welhaven's love of nature-symbolism, the poetic fantasy with which he fills the woods and waters with nature-sprites is quite evident in Ibsen's "*Blandede Digtninge*" of 1849-1850,¹⁴ in many of his early dramatic works of the fifties,¹⁵ and later in the *Epic Brand*.¹⁶

Johan Ludvig Heiberg,¹⁷ the Danish poet and critic, also had a strong influence upon Ibsen at this time, as is shown by the fact that Ibsen not only quotes him in his *Fortale* to *Norma*¹⁸ and applies Heiberg's aesthetic criticism to certain phases of dramatic art¹⁹ but also in a poem to Heiberg at the latter's death in 1860 (*Ved. J. L. Heibergs Død*) urges both Danes and Norwegians to carry on the poet's life-work, whom he considers to be a spokesman of the North.

The general tendency of aesthetic nature worship which both Heiberg and Welhaven represent can be plainly traced in Ibsen's early works of the fifties. He was then following out the so-called "*Heiberg-Welhavenske Linje*" which was carrying him somewhat away from a pure imitation of Oehlenschläger. Heiberg, for instance, made no such distinction

¹³ *Smaaskrifter*, p. 65 ff.

¹⁴ *Efterladte Skrifter*, Indledning LX-LXII, cf. *Møllergutten*, *Midnatsstemning*, *Inat* with Welhaven's *Digte*, 1839. *Nyere Digte*, 1845. *Halvhundredte Digte*, 1848.

¹⁵ Cf. *Sankt Hans Natten* and *Olaf Lüljekrans*.

¹⁶ *Episke Brand*, p. 257 ff.

¹⁷ *Fredrik Paasche*, *Smaaskrifter*, p. 62.
Efterladte Skrifter, Indledning, LXII.
Episke Brand, p. 262.

¹⁸ *Efterladte Skrifter*, I, 77.

¹⁹ *Asylet paa Grønland*, *Theatret*, *Efterladte Skrifter*, I, 228-234. I, 243-245.

between present and past as did Oehlenschläger. With Oehlenschläger the past represented an entirely different civilization and life from the present age. "For Heiberg centuries were as moments, men of the day were united with those long dead" (F. Paasche, p. 62). In Heiberg's foot-steps followed *Henrik Hertz* (1797-1870) with his anonymous *Gengangerbreve* which put into verse-form Heiberg's aesthetic principles.

When Roderik in *Kjæmpehøien* describes to Blanka the wild scenery and the valiant Viking of the North, he pauses for a moment thinking that Blanka, who has never seen Norway, can in no wise comprehend or appreciate the feeling he has for his native land. But Blanka here exhibits a fineness of feeling and appreciation of nature which makes it unnecessary for her physical eye to behold all these splendors. She says: "does man need to see and to hear everything with his outward senses? Has not the soul also eyes and ears to hear and to see with just as distinctly? With my physical eye I see, to be sure, the rich glow of color which the rose possesses; but the eyes of my soul can in the chalice see a winsome elf with the wings of a summer bird, who roguishly hides back of the red leaves and in sweet melodies whispers of a secret power from heaven which gave the flower its glorious color and perfume."

All this is stamped with the spirit of Welhaven, in fact we hear in Blanka's reply Welhaven's elf, as a symbolic spirit of nature, singing a song of praise to the flowers just as in the poet's *En Vaar-Nat* (*Nyere Digte*, 1845).²⁰

But in the contrast which Blanka emphasizes between spiritual and physical vision the influence of Hertz is just as apparent as that of Welhaven. One needs only to mention *Hertz's Kong Renés Datter* (1845) to understand the parallel involved. King René's daughter does not require the physical

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Vaar-Natten stille og sval
favner den slumrende Dal.
Elvene *nyne de lange*
dæmpede, dyssende Sange.
Alfer sukke
for de smukke
Lilier: "O, tager os tilfange!"

sense of sight until the flame of love within her arouses the desire for it. She senses the form, color, quality and other attributes of physical objects by means of the inner vision of the spirit. It is the soul of things which she sees with this vision just as Blanka who penetrates the spirit of nature with her inner vision. The real spirit of nature can be comprehended without seeing its outward form and color; a poetic thought thoroughly Romantic in conception and quite in keeping with the construction which Welhaven and Heiberg laid upon the interpretation of nature. But the parallel in thought between *Kong Renés Datter* and Blanka's reply to Roderik is too striking to be merely fortuitous. Why should Blanka, for instance, mention this inner vision and emphasize its power in contrast to the mere sensing of outward form, which one has through the physical sight? She might have answered Roderik's rebuke in various other ways, which would have satisfactorily assured him of her appreciation for the life and the natural scenery which he is describing to her. But instead she chooses to explain her appreciation on the ground of an inner vision of the spirit which can sense the real significance and beauty of nature.

Furthermore, in the opening scene of *Kjæmpehøien* when Blanka dwells in revery upon the imposing grandeur of Norwegian life, she expresses the wish that she might have "the magic swan's ham" (*svanehammen*) and fly over the sea. The beautiful legend of the mermaids who are provided with magic wings and fly to all parts of the earth has its roots in old Germanic folk-lore and was a very common motif among the Danish Romanticists. The legend finds its most beautiful literary expression in Hertz's *Svanehammen* (1841).

The influence of Hertz's *Svend Dyrings Hus* (1837) upon Ibsen's *Gildet paa Solhaug* (1855) cannot be denied, although Ibsen, in the *Fortale* of the second edition of *Gildet paa Solhaug*, strongly protests against any imitation on his part of Hertz's work. *Svend Dyrings Hus* and *Kong Renés Datter* are Hertz's two most famous dramas both of which were known in Norway as most graceful products of the Danish Romantic School. While theater director in Bergen, Ibsen himself presented *Svend Dyrings Hus* a little while after the

first performance of *Gildet paa Solhaug* (1856). Undoubtedly the dramas of Henrik Hertz, with their highly artistic form and grace, the most finished products of Romantic genius, impressed the young Ibsen at this period of his development.

In the concluding scene of *Kjæmpehøien* when the reconciliation has taken place and Blanka decides to follow her hero to the North, she utters a prophesy concerning the future of Norway. "Just as the spirit of the hero, whose body lies buried in the mound, shall rise to Valhalla there to do battle upon the plain of the Gods, so also the North shall rise from its grave, and its spirits, thus purified, shall do battle upon the sea of thought."

Når mos og blommer dækker høiens side,
skal heltens ånd på Idavold jo stride,—
så stiger også Norden fra sin grav
til luttret åndsbedrift på tankens hav!

The last two lines are the only ones written in Ibsen's own handwriting in the manuscript copy of 1854, now preserved in the Library of the Bergen Theater. Georg Brandes²¹ believes these lines lie outside the original limits set down for the drama and sees in them evidence of the poet's awakening to self-consciousness in spite of the imitative character of the whole work. "Ibsen," he says, "undoubtedly expresses here his strong and justified faith in the future."²²

Undoubtedly Ibsen does here express an optimistic hope as to the future of Norwegian intellectual life (åndsbedrift). Ibsen afterwards expressed his optimism concerning the future of man in a speech at Stockholm,²³ Sept. 24, 1887. He had often been accused of being a pessimist and here he took occasion to define exactly how he stood on this matter. "I am a pessimist in so far as I do not believe in the permanence of human ideals. But I am also an optimist in so far as I thoroughly believe in our power to transmit and develop those

²¹ *Georg Brandes, Henrik Ibsen, Tredje Indtryk* (1898), p. 126.

²² Men i disse ord har han da ogsaa utvetydigt udtalt sin stærke og berettigede Fremtidstro.

²³ *Supplementsbind*, p. 516-517. *Tale ved en fest i Stockholm*.

ideals (idealernes forplantningsevne og deres udviklingsdygtighed). The ideals of our age, by their very decadence, are tending towards that which I have called, in my drama *Keyser og Galilæ*, "*The Third Kingdom*." This "*Third Kingdom*" he further defines: "I believe that there will soon come a time when our social and political conceptions will cease to exist in their present form and from them both will grow up a unity which will, for the time being, contain within itself the conditions for man's happiness. I believe that poetry, philosophy and religion will be blended together into one new category and into one new vital power which we, who are living to-day, can in no wise comprehend."

This open declaration of trust in the future of man bears a striking resemblance to the young Ibsen of *Kjæmpehøien*, whose faith in the intellectual future of Norway is added in his own handwriting.

But in spite of the ulterior significance of this passage in *Kjæmpehøien*, there seems to be evidence that these last two lines were not entirely original with Ibsen as the expression of the poet's personal views, and furthermore that they did originally lie, contrary to Brandes's statement, within the lines set down for the drama. In Oehlenschläger's *Væringerne i Miklagard*, which undoubtedly partly served Ibsen as a model for *Kjæmpehøien*, Maria expresses, in the final scene of the play, exactly the same hope for the future of her fatherland as Blanka in *Kjæmpehøien* does for the North. Out of love for Maria, Harald has promised to spare her fellow-countrymen but though he spare them he will always despise them on account of their treachery and deceit. "The whole world," he says "shall, just as I, despise this brood of vipers." In her death struggle Maria sees a vision of the future. Raising herself in his arms with the convulsive strength which her approaching death lends her, Maria gives the lie to his false prophecy: "Hellas shall rise again, strong, noble and beautiful. Her heroes and poets shall be crowned anew, her language shall not perish nor her beautiful land with its springs and blue mountains, nor shall her spirit pass away in a degenerate race. Through the dark night of death I see clearly—my fatherland shall regain its glory."

Two circumstances confirm the suspicion that Ibsen based Blanka's epilog in *Kjæmpehøien* upon this passage in *Væringerne i Miklagard*. In the first place, the main thought in both passages coincides, as a sort of heraldic prophesy of a new age for the country which both characters (Blanka and Maria) love; in the former case her adopted land, in the latter her native land. Secondly, both passages are at the end of the play as a sort of epilog, giving the action a formal conclusion and lending a dramatic quality to the scene. Blanka's:—

så stiger også Norden fra sin grav
til luttret åndsbedrift på tankens hav!

is exactly the same idea as Maria's:—

Nei --- atter skal Hellas
Reise sig stærk, ædel og skjøn.

This thought may have been particularly attractive to Ibsen on account of his own faith in the future and therefore these two last lines in *Kjæmpehøien* were personally added by him in the manuscript copy in the Library of the Bergen Theater. But that they originally lay outside the limits set down for the drama is clearly refuted by the almost direct parallel in *Væringerne i Miklagard*, which more than any of Oehlenschläger's plays served Ibsen as his model for *Kjæmpehøien*.

Finally, it is of interest to note that Gandalf, in speaking of his duty as Viking chief, to protect the religion and life of the Old Norse warrior, refers to this office as a "call," an expression which Ibsen afterwards uses so frequently with regard to the mission of the individual in life. This "call" develops later into the great problem of *self-realization* which becomes one of Ibsen's most important philosophic concepts.

Gandalf.

Det blev *mit kald* som drot at værne om vort Kæmpeliv.

The study of *Kjæmpehøien*, as Ibsen's first Romantic production, is of great importance to the student of Norwegian literature. Here we see the poet in his inception, fumbling about for literary form and originality, still bound by the prevailing influence of Oehlenschläger and his School, yet at the same time betraying his own personality and the possibility of a different type of Viking drama. What Ibsen was to be

later, especially as author of *Fru Inger* and *Hærmændene* can be seen in germination in this youthful work. In short, no work offers us a better insight into Ibsen's own literary growth than *Kjæmpehøien*, for after a study of this play we realize what a truly marvelous development he experienced. He began as a pupil of Oehlenschläger but finished as his master.

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